

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

NEWPORT NEWS DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)	CRIMINAL NO. 4:02cr_____
)	
)	18 U.S.C. § 1341 Mail Fraud
v.)	(Count One)
)	
)	
THOMAS HOUSER)	

CRIMINAL INFORMATION

COUNT ONE

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY CHARGES THAT:

1. From on or about January 6, 2002 through on or about February 3, 2002, in the Eastern District of Virginia and elsewhere, defendant THOMAS HOUSER knowingly devised and intended to devise a scheme and artifice to defraud and to obtain money by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, which scheme and artifice, and the execution thereof, operated in substance as follows:

THE SCHEME AND ARTIFICE

2. The object of the defendant's scheme and artifice was to obtain money by fraudulent means from persons seeking to use the eBay Internet auction site to buy various goods, including laptop computers, audio equipment, automobile wheels, paintball guns, men's watches, and camcorders.

3. It was a part of the defendant's scheme and artifice to establish an auction site with eBay under the name Houser Family Store.

4. It was further a part of the defendant's scheme and artifice to obtain a box in his name at Mailboxes, Etc. in Fairfax, in the Eastern District of Virginia.

5. It was further a part of the defendant's scheme and artifice to offer to sell and to sell through the Houser Family Store auction site goods that the defendant had no intention of supplying to buyers.

6. It was further a part of the defendant's scheme and artifice to make false promises indicating that the goods advertised and purchased would be delivered following receipt of a buyer's payment by money order or other similar means of payment.

7. It was further a part of the defendant's scheme and artifice that following the closing of bids on an advertised item, the defendant would instruct the winning bidder to send the check or money order, made payable to the defendant, to the defendant's box at Mailboxes, Etc.

8. It was further a part of the defendant's scheme and artifice that, after receiving money orders or checks as payments from defrauded auction buyers, the defendant would cash the money orders and checks.

9. As a result of this fraudulent scheme and artifice, numerous persons bid upon, paid for, and purported to purchase from the defendant various merchandise which they never received and which had prices totaling \$73,012.21.

ACT IN EXECUTION OF THE SCHEME AND ARTIFICE

10. In furtherance of the scheme and artifice and to accomplish its object, on or about January 17, 2002, defendant THOMAS HOUSER caused Corey Richards to place four money orders, totaling \$1,744 and made payable to THOMAS HOUSER, in an envelope addressed to THOMAS HOUSER, Box 104, Mailboxes, Etc., 10310 Main Street, Fairfax, Virginia, which

were then delivered to that address in the Eastern District of Virginia by the United States Postal Service.

(In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1341).

Paul J. McNulty
United States Attorney

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